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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 004071

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/NGA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/01/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KISL](#) [SOCI](#) [KU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: LACK OF NAJAF SECURITY THREATENS SHIA SUPPORT

REF: A. KUWAIT 1417

[B](#). KUWAIT 1665

[C](#). KUWAIT 2276

[D](#). KUWAIT 3619

Classified By: CDA Frank C. Urbancic for reason 1.5 (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Reacting to the death of Sayed Mohammed Baqer Al-Hakim, prominent Kuwaiti Shi'is have again (reftels) warned the Embassy that the absence of increased security for Shi'a religious leaders based in the city of Najaf is threatening coalition efforts in Iraq and turning the country's majority Shi'i population against the U.S. End Summary.

#### Security for Religious Leaders Paramount

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[1](#)2. (C) Members of the prominent Kuwait Shi'a Marafie family met with Poloffs on the evening of Sept 1 to relay their concerns and those of the Shi'a religious establishment in Najaf, that the continued lack of security for Shi'a clerics in the city is severely undermining coalition efforts in Iraq. Abdul Ilah Marafie said that the office manager of Sayed Mohamed Said Hakim had recently asked him to pass a message to the USG that all religious leaders in Najaf are in danger in the current environment. He said that Shi'a worldwide were now beginning to blame the U.S. for the instability in Iraq, and called on the coalition to provide security for Shi'ism's Najaf-based leadership. Iraqi Governing Council Member Abdulaziz Baqer Al-Hakim has now taken to referring to coalition forces as "invaders," the Marafies said. "If you don't support the Shia, you will lose many things," they added. "A big percentage of the security of Iraq is the security of Najaf."

#### Responsibility for Al-Hakim's Death

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[1](#)3. (C) Speculating as to who was behind the recent murder of Sayed Mohammed Baqer Al-Hakim, the Marafies said they were convinced that Saddam Hussein had worked with elements of Al-Qaeda to pull off the attack, especially after they heard Al-Jazeera's broadcast earlier that same day of a tape in which a voice believed to be Saddam Hussein's denied responsibility for the incident. "When Saddam denies something, you can be sure he is behind it," noted one of the Marafie brothers. The brothers also stated they believed "Wahhabis" may be taking advantage of the situation in Iraq to further their goals.

#### Bahr-Al Oloum and the GC

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[1](#)4. (C) Lamenting that Iraq's Governing Council (GC) Member Mohammed Bahr Al-Oloum had withdrawn from that body in the aftermath of the Al-Hakim murder, Abdul Ilah Marafie claimed that he personally had been the one who had persuaded a reluctant Bahr al-Oloum to join the GC in the first place

[1](#)5. (C) Comment: The well-connected Marafies want us to succeed in Iraq, but fear the Shi'a community could erupt uncontrollably if another major Shi'a cleric were to be assassinated.

[1](#)6. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.  
URBANCIC